

THE
MELANCHOLY DOCTRINE
OF
PREDESTINATION
EXPOSED;
AND THE
DELIGHTFUL TRUTH
OF
UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION
REPRESENTED.

By EDWARD HARWOOD, D.D.

Ἐκαστος τῇ αμαρτίᾳ αὐτοῦ ἀπολείται, καὶ ἕκαστος τῇ
αὐτοῦ δικαιοπραξίᾳ σωθήσεται.

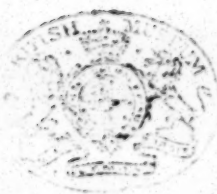
*Every man shall perish by his own personal wickedness,
and every man shall be saved by his own personal
righteousness.* — JUSTIN MARTYR. Dial. cum

Tryph. p. 400. Ed. Jebb.

L O N D O N :

Printed for T. BECKET and P. A. DE HONDT,
in the Strand.

M DCC LXVIII,



P R E F A C E.

LORD BOLINGBROKE, producing from one of Dr. Barrow's sermons this passage, "*That we may in due measure love God, he must appear proportionally amiable and desirable to us; he must appear to be the fountain of all good, the sole author of all the happiness we can hope for*" — immediately subjoins this reflection
" — Can any man now presume to say, that the God of *Moses*, or the God of *Paul*, is THIS amiable Being? The God of the *first* is partial, unjust, and cruel, delights in blood, commands assassina-

A 2 tions,

‘ tions, massacres, and even extermina-
 ‘ tions of people : the God of the *second*
 ‘ elects some of his creatures to salvation,
 ‘ and predestinates others to damnation,
 ‘ even in the womb of their mothers *.’

Hence it appears that his Lordship, among other reasons, discarded Christianity, and thought himself justified in discarding it, from a persuasion that it taught and inculcated the doctrine of PREDESTINATION. So that *Reprobation*, it seems, drives *some* into deism and infidelity, *others* it is daily plunging into the depths of religious gloom and despondency. The havock, reader, that is made of the amiable and benevolent religion of Jesus in the present age of Enthusiasm, is a melancholy

* See Lord Bolingbroke's Works, vol. 5th, p. 567.
 Quarto Edition. Lond. 1754.

consideration. No wonder that the rational, moral, and practical discourses of a learned and intelligent Clergy, both in the Establishment and among the Dissenters, should be now regarded by such multitudes with contempt and even horror, while such shocking and melancholy tenets, as being the only pure and fundamental doctrines of Christianity, are continually inculcated upon them by illiterate mechanics and visionaries, who find their account in terrifying and duping them, by eternally sounding in their ears this strange language—That once in grace and always in grace : once in Christ and always in Christ : once a child of God and always a child of God : that God from all eternity chose a *select few* to everlasting life—that Christ died *only* for these *few*.
—and

—and that these *few* are themselves—
 but predestinated infinite millions to
 everlasting punishment : that justifying
 faith and justifying righteousness is
every thing, morality *worse* than *nothing* :
 that none can ever fall from grace :
 that God sees no sin in his elect : that
 good works are filthy rags, the worst
 things a man can do to insure his own
 salvation : that *immorality* hath slain its
 thousands, but *morality* its ten thou-
 sands ! A good mind can hardly forbear
 dropping a tributary tear over Christi-
 anity, sacred to its departed benevo-
 lence and spirit, that reflects, that this
 heavenly Religion, which was designed
 to *fill us with joy and peace in believing*
 its truths, and in every scene and cir-
 cumstance of this vain life's pilgrimage
 to console and bless us, by supplying
 us,

us, at all times, with abundant cause to *rejoice evermore*, should be thus miserably depraved and perverted : instead of ministring to the comfort and felicity of the human heart, should only serve to collect a night of gloom and despair around it ; instead of *expanding* the soul with its liberal and benevolent principles, should *contract* it, and poison all its generous affections with the wretchedness of sect and system ; and instead of inspiring it with the most enlarged sentiments of the Divine goodness, and possessing it with that charity and love which is its distinguishing excellence and unrivalled glory, should sour it with the leaven of uncharitableness, wrap it in the unhallowed flames of bigotry and theological contention, and really teach it nothing better, no-
 thing

thing nobler, than the quaint phrase and the unintelligible jargon of mysticism and mystery ! The following little Treatise is honestly calculated to inspire the reader with the worthiest ideas of the Divine benevolence, and to vindicate and display the glory of the supreme universal *Parent*, whose *children* all rational creatures are, who would have ALL men to be saved, and whose primary design and ultimate end in *creating*, is HAPPINESS. May He bless what was sincerely intended to illustrate His glorious perfections, and do honour to the dignity and benevolence of the Christian Revelation !

BRISTOL, Aug. 1. 1768.

EDWARD HARWOOD.

THE
MELANCHOLY DOCTRINE
OF
PREDESTINATION
EXPOSED.

SECTION I.

§ 1. **T**HERE is nothing which fills the mind of a rational creature with such satisfaction as the goodness of God. The conscious persuasion that the Deity is good, communicates the most sublime pleasure and sacred transport

to every intelligent being. God is pure benevolence. His character is infinitely endeared to us by every thing in us and around us. All nature is replete with living proofs of his goodness. All those scenes of harmony, beauty, and usefulness which we behold, his goodness diffused. Whatever parts of nature we survey, we see the goodness of God engraven in the brightest characters. What is it that supports the visible frame of the universe, but his goodness? What is it maintains and felicitates the whole collective family in heaven and earth, but his goodness? What is it hath scattered such a profusion of blessings in this lower creation, but his liberal and unceasing goodness*?

What

* This is beautifully represented by *Seneca*. Unde ista quæ possides? quæ das? quæ negas? quæ servas? quæ rapis? unde hæc innumerabilia, oculos, aures, animum mulcentia? unde illa luxuriam quoque instruens copia? neque enim necessitatibus tantummodo

What is it makes the seasons harmoniously revolve, that endues the fertile bosom of nature with the principles of vegetation, that makes the verdant herbage to spring for the cattle, and the golden harvest to rise for the children of men, but his goodness? His goodness *shines in the sun, breathes in the air, flows in the ocean, and lives in all life.* And what was it called into existence such beings as we are? What cause can we assign for our being dignified with such powers, so highly exalted in the scale of being, advanced

modo nostris provifum est: ufque in delicias amamur. Tot arbufa, non uno modo frugifera, tot herbæ falutares, tot varietates ciborum, per totum annum digeftæ, ut inertiquoque fortuita terræ alimenta præberent. Jam animalia omnis generis, alia in ficco folidoque, alia in humo innafcentia, alia per fublime dimiffa, ut omnis rerum naturæ pars tributum aliquod nobis conferret. *Seneca Opera, tom. 1. p. 700. Edit. Gronov. 1672.*

to the dominion of the inferior creation, endowed with such intellectual and moral faculties for improving in knowledge, virtue, and happiness? What was it imparted to us so many enjoyments in the *present* life, and, moreover, taught us to aspire after immortality, but the goodness of God? From all her works universal nature proclaims this truth: *Thou art good: thou art continually doing good! These are thy wondrous works, parent of good! Thine this universal frame, so wondrous fair, thyself how wondrous then!*— This is one of the first great truths of natural religion: one of the *first* dictates of the human mind. The heart *feels* this truth, gives its joyful assent to it, cannot forbear devoutly celebrating it, and warmly exulting in it, when it contemplates the infinite and numberless displays of this most glorious attribute, which the whole creation around him exhibiteth. One of the first principles, one
of

of the most obvious sentiments, that obtrudes upon a thinking rational creature, is, That a *good* Being formed him, and that he was formed for *happiness*. That the *end* of creation must be *happiness*. That an agent so fearfully and wonderfully made, endowed with such a mind, formed for such exalted attainments, and made capable of enjoying God, and truth and happiness, and who moreover hath such a rich variety of blessings provided for him to render both *natural* and *moral* life agreeable and happy to him, must not have been formed in vain—formed for some † low and trivial purpose—much less formed

† Animal hoc providum, sagax, multiplex, acutum, memor, plenum rationis & consilii, quem vocamus hominem, præclara quadam conditione generatum esse a summo Deo: solum est enim ex tot animantium generibus atque naturis particeps rationis et cogitationis, cum cetera sint omnia expertia. Quid

formed for misery and wretchedness. When God had finished the works of creation he beheld them with complacency: he blessed them and pronounced them good! Especially must man, his noblest work, whom he stamped with his image, constituted the lord of nature, and so nearly allied to himself, be the distinguished object of his delight and love. Infinite *Benevolence* can have no end in creation but a *benevolent* one. An infinitely good *Creator* can design nothing but the happiness of the *creature*. This is a self-evident truth: one of the fundamental and capital articles of *natural* religion—and the

est autem non dicam in homine, sed in omni cœlo atque terra, ratione divinius? *Cicero de legibus*, p. 27, 28. *Edit. Davies. Cantab. 1727.* Cogitavit enim nos ante natura, quam fecit: nec tam leve opus sumus, ut illi potuerimus excidere—Scias, non esse hominem tumultuarium et incogitatum opus. *Seneca Opera*, tom. i. p. 805. *Edit. Gronov. 1672.*

order,

order, beauty, and happiness of the whole creation around us most gloriously confirm and illustrate it. And to this *Revelation* adds its sacred testimony. Its heavenly pages exhibit the Deity to us under the most amiable and endearing character. *God is love. The Lord is good, and continually doing good. The Lord is good to all : his tender mercies are over ALL his works. The Lord, the Lord God, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and full of compassion. God would have all men to be saved. God is unwilling that any should perish. God so loved the world that he sent his Son.*

SECTION II.

§ 2. SINCE then both *Reason* and *Revelation* harmoniously unite in representing the God that made us under this lovely and engaging character, merciful Father, how could the bosom of any of thy children ever nourish

such a sentiment as eternal *Reprobation*, Great God ! how could any of thy creatures, whom thine infinite goodness ushered into this state of being to behold thy works, to adore and love thee—how could a frail creature, a composition of dust and ashes, who owes its breath, its being, its *all*, to thine infinite and unceasing agency and goodness, ever represent thee to its *heart*, as a Being, who from all Eternity, by a sovereign unalterable decree, had predestinated thousands and millions of souls to the eternal and never-ending torments of hell—fore-appointing and fore-ordaining that only a small and inconsiderable number, a very few individuals out of many myriads, finally should be saved ! By what means did such an impious and blasphemous thought against the Majesty of heaven, such a petulant and daring impeachment of the character of the blessed God, ever find its way into a creature's mind ? Is this the Being
whom

whom in our prayers we style merciful, gracious, and good ? Is this the character of the universal PARENT ?—this the character of the Maker, Governor, and Judge of mankind ?—this the character of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ? Is this the Being whom we Christians are taught to *worship* in *spirit* and in *truth*, and to *love* with all our hearts, minds, and understandings ? Did the mind of man ever conceive and form any thing so injurious to the Deity ? Reader, can you name me any sentiment that so much sullies the lustre of the Divine perfections, eclipses his rectitude, justice, and goodness, or produce *any* doctrine of *any* system that ever was invented by *any* man or body of men that has such a tendency to overwhelm the world in cheerless despondency and despair by wiping the very *first* attribute out of the Divine character ? Say, in what dark and *distant* age of the Christian church did
this

this detestable doctrine of Reprobation establish itself? The Son of God, who was in the bosom of the Father, taught no such tenet. His disciples and companions are strangers to it. A predestinating god is not the God of inspired prophets, evangelists, and apostles. The pure and sacred pages they wrote are stained with no such pollution. The *primitive* Christians, for *several* centuries, had no such notion among them. I have searched the writings of the *three* first centuries, and cannot find that among all the various *heresies*, *sentiments*, and *systems* that obtained amongst them, the infernal doctrine of *Predestination* hath a place. In those blessed ages *universal* Redemption was the *universal* doctrine—that **ALL** might obtain salvation that would, that would strenuously exert their endeavours—that pardon and mercy were freely offered to *every* individual of the human race—that heaven was open to all men—that none were excluded,

excluded, but who excluded *themselves*—that if any soul forfeited salvation, his loss of it was his own voluntary act and deed—could be justly attributed to no other cause, but his *own* spontaneous choice—that there were no decrees of God *against* him—that God waited over every immortal soul to be gracious—that every intelligent agent was endowed with moral freedom and liberty †—
could

† Let the reader carefully weigh the following passages which I have extracted from the writings of the *primitive* Christians. Οὐδὲ κατ' ἐμαρμενὴν πράττειν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἢ πάσχειν τὰ γινόμενα, ἀλλὰ κατὰ μὲν προαιρέσειν ἑκάστου καλοῦθουν ἢ αἰμαρμενεῖν. We Christians do not believe that men *act* or *suffer* according to an absolute destiny, but we maintain that every man doth *good* or *evil* in consequence of his own free and voluntary choice. *Justin Martyr. Apol. 2. p. 17. Edit. Oxon. 1703.* Ὅτι αὐτεξουσίαν το τε τῶν ἀγγέλων γένος, καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεός, ὁμοίως ἵπερ αὐτὸν αὐτὸν πᾶσι μελλήσασσι, τὴν τιμωρίαν ἐν αἰωνίῳ πυρὶ κομίσονται.

could choose a sinful or a virtuous life, could embrace virtue and shun vice—and that future

νομισονται. Because God originally endowed both *angels* and *men* with free will and liberty of action, therefore it is that for their transgressions of duty they will justly be doomed to the punishment of eternal fire. *Justin Martyr. Apol. 2. p. 18. Edit. Oxon. 1703.* Γεννητου δε παντος ἡδε ἡ φύσις, κακίας ἔ ἀρετῆς δεικνύον εἶναι· οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἢν ἐπαινετοῦν οὐδὲν αὐτῶν, εἰ οὐκ ἢν ἐπ' ἀμφοτέρω τρεπεσθαι ἔ δυνάμειν εἶχε. It is the nature of every rational being to be capable of either vice or virtue : for no *action* would be *praise-worthy*, if the agent had not a power freely to embrace either vice or virtue. *Ibid. p. 18.* Βουλομένης γὰρ τούτους ἐν ἐλευθερίᾳ προκαλεσθαι ἔ αὐτεξουσίους γενόμενους τοὺς τε ἀγγέλους ἔ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ὁ Θεός. κ. λ. For the Deity willing that both angels and men should be endowed with *freedom of will* and *liberty of action*. *Dialog. cum Tryphone, p. 268. Edit. Jebb. Lond. 1719.* See also *p. 301.* Οὐκ αἰτία τοῦ Θεοῦ. κ. λ. The Deity is not chargeable with the wickedness either of angel or men, but the guilt solely rests with every indivi
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ture happiness or misery was the fruit of men's
own personal righteousness or unrighteousness,
not

dual. *Justin Martyr. Dial. cum Tryphone, p. 400, 401. Edit. Jebb. Lond. 1719.* The following is a distinguished passage. τὰς τιμωρίας ἡ τὰς κολάσεις ἡ τὰς ἀγαθὰς ἀμοιβὰς κατ' ἀξίαν ἑκάστου ἀποδοῦναι. κ. λ. We have learned from the prophets that rewards and punishments are distributed according to the *merit* of every person's respective *actions*, and we pronounce this doctrine true. For if it were not so, but every thing took place in consequence of an inflexible fatality, there would then be absolutely nothing at all in our own power. For if *one* man was absolutely fated to be *good*, and *another* to be *bad*, the *former* could not with any justice be *rewarded*, or the latter *condemned*. And if the human race were *not* endowed with a free and voluntary liberty to *choose* moral *good*, and *avoid* moral *evil*, they could not properly be accountable for any actions whatsoever.—For God hath not formed man like brute animals and trees, incapable of doing any thing by a moral and spontaneous liberty; for he could not deserve either *praise*
or

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SECTION

or recompense, if he did not of *himself* freely choose the good, but was *made* such; nor if *wicked*, could he justly be doomed to punishment, if he did not constitute *himself* such by his own voluntary choice, and never had it in his power to render himself otherwise than what he was. *Justin Martyr. Apol. i. p. 64, 65. Edit. Thirlby. Lond. 1722.* Το δὲ ἑκάτερον τῆς ποιήσεως ἐστὶν, αὐτεξουσίαν γεγενη. Both orders of being [angels and men] are endowed with freedom of will. *Tatian contra Gracos, p. 146. Edit. Paris 1636.* Τῶν ἀνθρώπων αὐθαίρετον. κ. λ. Men are at perfect liberty with regard to virtue and vice: otherwise you could not reward the good, or punish the bad, if virtue and vice were not in their own power. *Athenagora Legatio, p. 113. Edit. Oxon. 1682.* Οὐτὶ οὐν ἀθανάτου αὐτὸν ἐποίησεν οὐτὶ μὲν θνητὸν. κ. λ. For God did not form man either *immortal* or *mortal*, but capable of both, as we said above: if he keeps the commandments of God, that he should attain to immortality,

SECTION III.

§ 3. IF, therefore, it is the language of Christ, That there is joy in heaven over one sinner

receive this blessedness as his reward, and become a glorified spirit: but, on the contrary, if he turn aside to the works of death and disobey God, that *he himself* should be the author of his own perdition: for God hath made man a free agent and master of his own actions—for as man by wilfully violating his duty draws upon himself destruction, so every one that obeyeth the will of God, may, *if he pleaseth*, obtain for himself everlasting life: for God hath given us his law and holy commandments, which every one that observeth may be saved, and obtaining a resurrection inherit immortality. *Theophilus ad Autolycum*, p. 104. Edit. Paris 1636. Illud autem, quod ait: *Quotiens volui congregare filios tuos, et noluisti?* veterem legem libertatis hominis manifestavit, quia *liberum* eum Deus fecit ab initio, habentem *suam potestatem*, sicut et suam animam, ad utendum sententiâ Dei voluntariè, et non coactum à Deo—

Possit

sinner that repenteth; if inspired Apostles tell us, That God would have all men to be saved; and if the *primitive church* for *several*

Posuit autem in homine *potestatem electionis*, &c. *Irenæus. Edit. Grabe, Oxon. 374.* Εἰ φύσει, οἱ μὲν φαυλοὶ, οἱ δὲ ἀγαθοὶ γεγενασίη, οὐθ' οὗτοι ἐπαινέται, οὔτε ἀγαθοὶ, τοιοῦτοι γὰρ κατεσκευάσθησαν· οὐτ' ἐκεῖνοι μαραπτῶσι, οὕτως γεγονότες. If *by nature* some are bad and others good; the good are not praise-worthy; for they were constituted such: nor are the bad worthy of blame, being necessarily made such. *Irenæus. Grabe. Oxon. 375.* See some more excellent passages on this subject, p. 375, 376, 377. 380, 381, 382. 393. 443. 445. *Edit. Grabe. Oxon. 1702.* Mens tamen libera est, et ideo actus hominis non *nativitas* judicatur. *Minucius Felix, p. 175. Edit. Davies. Cantab. 1712.* Τῇ δὲ αἰτίᾳ τοῦ μὴ το βέλτιστον ἐλογμῆναι, Θεὸς ἀναίτιος. God is clear: the fault is *solely* in him who will not choose what is good. *Clemens Alexandrinus, Stromata 1. p. 271. Edit. Paris 1629.* Οὐχ ὑπακούεις τῇ Θεῷ, σεαυτὸν αἰτιῶ. Dost thou not obey God? the blame is *solely* thine, p. 127. See also p. 55. 62. 73. 259. *Edit. Paris 1629.*

centuries

centuries were happy strangers to Predestination, and maintained the glorious heavenly doctrine of universal redemption, of final salvation freely offered to ALL—in what age was this shocking and execrable notion, that so dreadfully impeaches the Divine goodness, and asperges the Deity's character and perfections, first propagated!—*St. Augustin* is said to be the father of *Predestination* *. In his youth he was a rigid *Montanist*. These were some of the most severe and gloomy visionaries and enthusiasts we ever read of—and tho' he afterwards relinquished this sect, yet he carried, like *Calvin*, its *darkness* upon his

* *Primos doctores Christianos usque ad Augustinum prædestinationem absolutam prorsus ignorasse—Sententiam de absolutâ prædestinatione primus [Augustinus] in Ecclesiam Christianam inexit. See Limborch's excellent Treatise, intitled, Relatio Historica de origine et progressu controversiarum in sæderato Belgio, sub init. Haga Com. 1736.*

mind as long as he lived. Reprobation was a doctrine perfectly congenial to *Austin's* dark soul. He was a man of a very bad temper. He viewed the Deity through *this* wretched medium. His writings are the overflowings of his heart. They exhibit a faithful picture of his mind. They are full of scurrility and rancour. He was a very uncharitable zealot, a most furious bigot and incendiary, and a virulent and implacable controversialist. The man had genius, and, like *Calvin*, wrote good Latin; but with all his literary endowments he was an haughty and arrogant creature, abusing every one in the most opprobrious terms who did not think in Divinity as he did—a bold speculatist, who had the temerity and presumption to tear asunder the veil that hides *divine* things from *mortal* view, and to publish to men the *divine* counsels with a confidence and audacity, just as if he had himself been in the cabinet of heaven, and
 had

had accurately read the whole volume of the Divine decrees.—From St. *Augustin* the doctrine of Election and Predestination came by inheritance to the church of *Rome* †. It received great improvements in the *Vatican*, and the INFALLIBLE vicar of Christ and successor of the Apostles, *our Lord God the Pope*,

† The *Dominicans*, *Augustins*, and *Jansenists*, with several other doctors of the church, adopt the following propositions: That the *impulse* of Divine grace cannot be *opposed* or resisted;—That there are no remains of *purity* or *goodness* in human nature since its fall—That the *eternal decrees* of God, relating to the salvation of men, are neither founded upon, nor attended with, any *condition* whatsoever. *Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. MacLaine's translation, vol. 2. p. 117. and p. 391.* See also a curious and entertaining account of the controversy in the *Romish* church concerning *Predestination* and *Grace* in the 14th volume of *LE CLERC's Bibliothèque Universelle*. This excellent tract is intituled, *Memoires pour servir à l'Histoire des Controverses dans l'Eglise Romaine sur la Predestination et sur la Grace.*

stamped it with his sanction.—Would to God that this *corrupt* doctrine had ever been confined to that *corrupt* church, and never found its way among the *Reformed*. But it is too well known that those great and glorious men, whose names will be transmitted to the latest ages, with everlasting honours, for the noble stand they made against the corruption, domination, and unrighteous encroachments of the Church of Rome—the illustrious REFORMERS in *England, Holland, Germany, and Switzerland*, did not protest against all the absurdities of the papal hierarchy—It could not be expected that *perfect* light should in a *moment* spring from total darkness—With all their conspicuous talents and endowments they had, alas! too much of the spirit of *Popery*—for it is too notorious to be denied that they brought with them out of that church, PREDESTINATION †, and PERSE-

† The doctrines of *absolute Predestination*, irrefragable grace, and *human impotence*, were never carried

CUTION. Infinite were the troubles and miseries in which disputes about *Fatalism* and
Repro-

to a more excessive length, nor maintained with a more virulent obstinacy by any divine, than they were by LUTHER. *Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. translated by MacLaine, vol. 2. p. 173.* CALVIN maintained, that the everlasting condition of mankind in a future world was determined from all eternity by the *unchangeable* order of the Deity, and that this *absolute* determination of his *will* and *good pleasure* was the *only* source of happiness or misery to every individual. *Ibid. p. 194, 195.* The *absolute decree* of God, with respect to the future and everlasting condition of the human race, was an essential tenet in the creed of CALVIN, who inculcated with zeal the following doctrine: That God, in predestinating, from all eternity, one part of mankind to everlasting happiness, and another to endless misery, was led to make this distinction by no other motive than his own GOOD PLEASURE AND FREE WILL. *Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. vol. 2. p. 200.* Erasmus wrote a treatise intitled, *De libero arbitrio diatribe*, in which, says Dr. *Jortin*, he represents the doctrine of Predestinarian
C 3 fatality

Reprobation and *Free-will*, involved the *Reformed*, particularly in *Holland* *. Whole nations contended and strove for these points, as if they were the *peculiar* glory and *distinguishing* honour of the gospel. And it is well known that king *James* the first, who affected the character of a profound Divine, and whose whole soul and affections were wrapped in Theological disputation, to prevent this happy nation from being involved in one universal flame from controversies about Divine decrees, out of his *illustrious* and renowned wisdom, in which he *excelled* most

fatality as extremely dangerous to the morals of men, and as a doctrine which, till *then*, had been embraced by no persons of note, except *Manichæus* and *Wicliffe*. *Jortin's Life of Erasmus*, vol. 2. p. 270.

* It is with pleasure I refer my reader to a well-written account of these unhappy controversies in *Holland* about *Predestination*, by the celebrated *Limborck*, which is annexed to his *Theologia Christiana*. *Editio quarta*. *Hagæ Comit.* 1736.

men,

men, published an edict, That no Divine, under the character of a Bishop or a Dean should presume to preach about Predestination †. The *Turks* are rigid Predestinarians ‡, and they believe, almost to a man, that the period of life cannot be shortened or prolonged a single moment, and that the particular *fortune* and particular *death*, to which every one is fated, hath been determined and fixed by an irreversible decree from all Eternity. The *Coran* solemnly inculcates this as a sacred doctrine—the impostor *Mohammed*, whose religion is founded in

† See Dr. *Jortin's* Dissertations, p. 27.

‡ Inter *Turcas* multi sunt Prædestinarii, qui dicunt quod *Cujusque* satum scriptum sit in sua fronte. Vid. *Alberti Bobovii* de visitatione ægrotorum in the first volume of *Hyde's* works lately published by Dr. *Gregory Sharpe*, p. 285. *Oxon.* 1767. The republic of letters is greatly indebted to my learned and worthy friend Dr. *Sharpe* for this valuable collection and edition of Dr. *Hyde's* tracts.

blood, foreseeing that this doctrine would be of singular efficacy in inspiring his soldiers and followers with intrepidity and resolution: “ The sixth great point of faith, says the learned Mr. SALE, which the *Mohammedans* are taught by the *Coran* to believe, is, God’s absolute decree and predestination both of good and evil. For the orthodox doctrine is, that whatever hath or shall come to pass in this world, whether it be good or whether it be bad, proceedeth entirely from the Divine will, and is irrevocably fixed and recorded from all eternity in the *preserved table*; God having secretly predetermined not only the adverse and prosperous fortune of every person in the world, in the most minute particulars, but also his faith and infidelity, his obedience or disobedience, and consequently his everlasting happiness or misery after death; which fate or predestination it is not possible, by any foresight or wisdom, to avoid.—Of
 this

this doctrine *Mohammed* makes great use in his *Coran* for the advancement of his designs ; encouraging his followers to fight without fear, and even desperately, for the propagation of their faith, by representing to them that all their caution could not avert their inevitable destiny, or prolong their lives for a moment*—That madman *Charles* the XIIth of Sweden and our illustrious king *William*, it is said, believed *Predestination* †, and were firmly persuaded that every ball had its commission.—In the *present* age this gloomy, uncomfortable, and horrid doctrine, notwith-

* See *Sale's* Preliminary Discourse prefixed to his translation of the *Coran*, vol. 1. p. 137. Edit. 8vo. Lond. 1764.

† Il [Charles] ne conserva de ses premiers principes que celui d'une Prédestination absolue, dogme qui favorisoit son courage, et qui justifioit ses témérités. *Histoire de Charles XII. par Voltaire*, p. 149. Edit. Basle.

standing

standing it makes *one* of the thirty-nine ARTICLES *, and is universally subscribed, is regarded with just abhorrence by the *Clergy* and members of the *Church of England* †.

Though

* *Article xvii. The godly consideration of Predestination*, says this shocking article, *is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons.*

† The spirit of toleration and indulgence grew still more forbearing and comprehensive after the famous synod of *Dort*. For though the sentiments and doctrines of the *Arminians* were rejected and condemned in that numerous assembly, yet they gained ground privately, and insinuated themselves into the minds of many. The Church of *England* under the reign of CHARLES I. publicly renounced the opinions of CALVIN relating to the *Divine Decrees*. *Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. translated by MacLaine, vol. 2. p. 189.* In *England* the face of religion changed considerably, in a very little time after the famous synod [of *Dort*] now mentioned; and this change, which was entirely in favour of *Arminianism*, was principally effected by the counsels and influence
of

Though they have long been reproached with it, I am sure it hath *now* ceased to be a doctrine of the *Dissenters*, at least of every society that a man of sense and benevolence would choose to be seen among. The *majority* of the *Methodists*, to their honour, have dis-

of WILLIAM LAUD, archbishop of *Canterbury*. This revolution gave new courage to the *Arminians*; and from *that* period to the *present* time they have had the pleasure of seeing the decisions and doctrines of the synod of *Dort*, relating to the points in debate between them and the *Calvinists*, treated, in *England*, with something more than mere indifference, beheld by *some* with *aversion*, and by *others* with *contempt*. *Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. vol. 2. p. 484.* Every one is acquainted with the change that has taken place in the Established Church of *England*, whose clergy, generally speaking, since the time of archbishop LAUD, have embraced the *Arminian* doctrine concerning *Predestination* and *Grace*; and, since the restoration of CHARLES II. have discovered a strong propensity to many other tenets of the *Arminian* church. *Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. vol. 2. p. 551.*
claimed

claimed and renounced it. Mr. *John Wesley* hath written an excellent and spirited treatise against *Predestination*. His numerous followers regard it with horror. It is now almost universally exterminated from *Britain*. It has only been able to find a little *dark sequestered retreat* among a few miserable *Antinomians* and the *Calvinistic Baptists* *. Thanks be to God for *increasing light*, for the *triumphs of truth, knowledge, liberty, and Christianity* †!

* See a curious *Confession of faith*, which the *Critical Reviewers* justly style CALVINISTIC IN THE TRUE SUBLIME, delivered by *Caleb Evans*, before the society of Independent Baptists in *Broad-mead, Bristol*: in which the Confessionalist publicly declares his BELIEF in the *grossly abused doctrine of personal election*, and solemnly proclaims to the world, that *Christ died only for his chosen few*! meaning, no doubt, by these CHOSEN FEW, the good, old, sound Predestinarian Anabaptists!

† The doctrines of *absolute Predestination, irresistible*

SECTION IV.

§ 4. Think, reader, impartially think, can any thing be more injurious to the perfections

fitful grace, and *human impotence*, were never carried to a more excessive length, nor maintained with a more virulent obstinacy by any Divine, than they were by LUTHER. But in THESE times he has *very few* followers in this respect, even among those that bear his name. *Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. vol. 2. p. 173. Note (b).* Even the *United Provinces*, which saw within their bosom the defeat of *Arminianism*, are at THIS time sensible of a considerable *change* in that respect. *Ibid. p. 531.* What is still more remarkable, and therefore ought not to be passed over in silence, we see the city of *Geneva*, which was the parent, the nurse, and the guardian of the doctrine of *Absolute Predestination* and *Particular Grace*, not only put on sentiments of charity, forbearance, and esteem for the *Arminians*, but become *itself* so far *Arminian*, as to deserve a *place* among the *churches* of that communion. *Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. translated by Mac-laine, vol. 2. p. 485.*

of

of the DEITY, can any thing so egregiously fully and totally eclipse the glorious lustre of his character, as to believe and represent to one's *heart* the great GOD as creating millions of immortal, never-dying souls on purpose to suffer the pains and punishments of hell through all the revolving ages of an absolute ETERNITY!—and this, by an arbitrary fixed decree, which there is no reversing; a stern decree, which the wretched being, from all eternity, doomed to be miserable, cannot abrogate or soften, and which stood in full force against him millions of ages before he hung on his mother's breast! Can any idea be more blasphemously shocking and detestable, than to figure and paint to one's thoughts God Almighty thus wantonly sporting with the happiness of his creatures, peopling the earth with unnumbered numbers of souls, and yet from these infinite millions, from this countless crowd of beings formed for immortality,

tality, fastidiously culling out here and there
 one soul, selecting a very inconsiderable few,
 operating upon *these* indeed, but freely sur-
 rendering *all* the rest to Satan's controul,
 granting to this little diminutive number his
 grace, and spirit, and love, but subjecting all
 the rest to the devil's tyranny, remedilessly,
 inevitably to perish unenlightened, unassisted,
 unbeloved!—What should we think of the
wisdom, of the *honour*, of the *rectitude* and
goodness of the parent of a *numerous* family,
 who should have *one* or *two* favourites, on
 whom he was perpetually lavishing all his
 kindness, and totally *disregarding* and *neg-*
lecting and *ruining* all the rest!—What! is
 not the *goodness* of GOD ample enough for
 ALL his creatures? If all the *whole* collective
 system of beings enjoyed it, would they *ex-*
haust it? Or are the *mansions* of our *Father's*
house not *numerous* or *capacious* enough to
 hold *all* his *family*? Is his approbation too
 great

great a blessing to be indulged to ALL—is it like the approbation of *earthly* princes, *partial* and *limited*, and *restricted* only to a *few*? Is the arm of the Lord shortened that he could not save *all*; or his is benevolence bounded and contracted that he is not *disposed* to save *all*? Or, is the grace and love of the compassionate Jesus not large and liberal and extensive enough to comprehend and embrace *all*? Or, are the assistances of the Divine Spirit circumscribed within so *narrow* a sphere that they cannot animate and befriend *all*?—Will any of these considerations be pleaded? With *modesty*, with *truth*, can any of these narrow and miserable principles be alledged? Is not the goodness of God an undiminished and indefectible fountain? Doth he not dispense the water of life to all his creatures freely? Doth that benevolence, that formed the soul immortal, envy its salvation? Is not the *primary*
and

and *ultimate* design of creation, happiness? Hath not a good God formed EVERY rational creature for HAPPINESS? Are the inhabitants of this *planet* overlooked amidst the *boundless* immensity of God's universe? Is the happiness of *terrestrial* beings a thing infinitely below the Divine regard? Or, is the *destruction* of great numbers, as it is sometimes under *human* governments, necessary to the safety, conservation, and happiness of the *Divine* government? Is the *perdition* of souls a link in the great chain of the Divine administration? And doth the reprobation of the majority, and the election of a few, form a part, a *necessary* part, of that vast and *glorious* scheme which was planned from all eternity? A *reprobating* God!—Is this a pleasing idea? Can we look up to *such* a Being with filial affection and love, and say, *Abba! Father!*

D SECTION

SECTION V.

§ 5. BUT this horrible doctrine of *Predestination* is not only injurious to the *character* of the blessed God, and a satire and insult upon his *goodness*, but it is repugnant to the whole tenor of *scripture*. What does the infallible standard of truth declare concerning the *terms* and *conditions* of mens final acceptance? Is there a single passage that *asserts*, or even obscurely intimates, that men, at the judgment-day, will be saved in consequence of God's decree of election, or condemned in consequence of a divine pre-ordination? Does not the word of God, the great rule of our faith, universally declare, in the plainest and clearest expressions, that *all* mankind will be judged according to their *WORKS*? that the decisive sentence will be regulated solely by the *DEEDS* done in the body? That what-
ever

ever a man *sows* in *this* life he shall *reap* in the *next* ? That we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ, and every one receive the THINGS done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be *good* or *bad* ? That if we do good we shall be accepted, if we do evil, sin lieth at our own door ? That God is no respecter of persons, hath no *favourites* among his children, but is the impartial, righteous, and benevolent parent and governor of the whole world ; for that in *every* nation, *Christian*, *Mohammedan*, *Pepisb*, or *Pagan*, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of God ? That God will render to *every* man according to his *WORKS* ; to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honour, and immortality, eternal life ; but to them that do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth

EVIL ? How diametrically inconsistent, how infinitely incompatible, are such declarations as these with the gloomy, blasphemous, and infernal doctrine of absolute election and eternal reprobation !—That all mankind will stand or fall, be placed on the *right* hand or on the *left*, possess *eternal* life, or be consigned to *everlasting* torments, not in consequence of their own *personal* conduct and actions, but only as the decrees of God fortuitously happen to be *for* them or *against* them, millions of ages before they were born ! Surely, after long cogitation, the DEVIL must have invented this doctrine to poison human happiness, and to overwhelm dejected and melancholy souls in despair. For is there any thing that does such violence to all the declarations of scripture, any thing more opposite to the nature and genius and design of revelation, than such a mean and miserable system, such an unrighteous and wicked limitation of the goodness of God,

God, the benevolence of Jesus, and the salvation of the world? Doth not the great God peremptorily aver with a solemn oath, pledging his own veracity; As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: a blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God; a curse, if you will not obey. See, I have set before thee this day, life and good, death and evil: in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways and to keep his commandments—and the Lord thy God shall bless thee. But if thou wilt not hear, I denounce unto you this day, that you shall surely perish. I call heaven and earth to record this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse-

ing. Therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live. Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked shall die, saith the Lord, and not that he should return from his ways and live? Must all these plain texts, Christian reader, signify nothing? must they all be explained away, and lose their perspicuity, lustre and glory, when *Predestination* is named? Can the God of *truth* utter *contradictory* declarations, solemnly deliver admonitions and exhortations with which they have no *power* to comply, and publish to his creatures that they shall be finally judged according to their *WORKS*, at the same time that he knows that their future destiny is sealed, hath been sealed and fixed from all eternity, and any endeavours they can exert, any course and conduct they can pursue, absolutely incapable to revoke and reverse it? Far be such duplicity and prevarication from the God that cannot lie; far such dissimulation and

and insincerity from a Being of perfect rectitude and inviolable truth ! Forbid it piety, honour, decency, and every sacred principle, that the blessed God, when he proclaims to the world the great terms and conditions on which he will *accept* or *reject* his creatures, should at the *very* time have any *mental* reservations, any *secret* will different from his *revealed* will !—Consequently, we may conclude the whole tenor of Scripture justifies the conclusion, That it is not *God*, but man that destroys himself. That if any soul miss of final salvation, it is its own voluntary act and deliberate deed, which it was in its own power to have prevented, and which God and Christ and Conscience were infinitely desirous it should have prevented. That life and death, happiness and misery are set before us all. That God hath endowed us with moral liberty and freedom of will to choose the *one* or the *other*, and it is our own spon-

taneous deliberate *choice* that renders us the *proper* objects, either of *reward* or of *punishment*. That if any rational agent incur everlasting destruction, God is clear; there was no gloomy decree of reprobation against him; it was he that reprobated and predestinated *himself* to this wretched end by his own wilful folly, and personal, self-chosen wickedness. That *God tempteth no man* to sin, and predestinateth no soul to misery, but every one is tempted to vice and predetermines his own destiny for himself, when he suffers his lusts to sway the sceptre of the mind, to dethrone reason and conscience, and to make havock of every thing serious and sacred, and by his voluntary guilt and immorality draws down upon himself those punishments which God hath solemnly denounced, and will assuredly inflict on every sinful and self-depraved creature.

SECTION

SECTION VI.

§ 6. *Milton*, in his *Paradise Lost*, represents a select *company* of the fallen spirits retiring from the *rest* to a private sequestered scene, and there amusing and puzzling themselves with *Predestination*. These are the *Poet's* strains :

Others apart sat on a hill retir'd
 In thoughts more elevate, and reason'd high
 Of Providence, Fore-knowledge, Will, and
 Fate ;
 Fix'd Fate, Free-will, Fore-knowledge absolute,
 But found no end, in wand'ring mazes lost.

Par. Lost. Book ii. l. 557.

Speculations about *destiny*, and *fatalism*, and *necessity*, are proper enough for *fallen* spirits to teaze and perplex themselves with, for they are essentially *insignificant* and *useless*, and

they are naturally productive of *gloom* and *despondence*. For what can be a more uncomfortable and melancholy doctrine, than that the final destiny of every distinct individual of the human race, that ever existed or will exist, was, from all eternity, absolutely sealed and fixed by a stern irreversible decree! A certain *Bishop* of excellent understanding, disputing against St. *Augustin* on this subject, makes this observation: *If one is doomed to life, and another to perdition, we are not born to be judged, but all of us judged before we were born.* The remark is just, says Dr. *Jortin*, and ten *Augustins* and *Calvins* cannot answer it †.—The Scripture represents Religion as the parent of joy, and the unabating source of the noblest mental pleasures and satisfactions. It exhorts us to *serve the Lord with gladness—to rejoice in the Lord always—and to approach the universal Parent and Do-*

† Dr. *Jortin's* Dissertations, p. 32, 33.

nor of every good and perfect gift with liberal confidence and filial affections. The *Scripture*, ever in harmonious concord with the voice and dictates of *reason*, represents the service of our Maker as our truest freedom and liberty, as the foundation of the most solid and substantial happiness, communicating the purest delights and noblest supports in every changing scene and circumstance of this vain life's pilgrimage, and constituting the highest glory, dignity, and perfection of our rational natures, describing its *ways to be ways of pleasantness, and all its paths to be peace*.—But if this execrable doctrine of *Reprobation* were true, if the eternal miserable destiny of millions of mankind were absolutely and unconditionally determined before they ever existed, and a rigid irrevocable decree, doom-ing infinite numbers of souls to infernal torments, took place before they had a being, how shockingly insincere and absurd would
all

all these scriptural calls and exhortations be to joy and *cheerfulness* in Religion! For what *good heart* could *rejoice* in a predestinating God, serve such a Being with *gladness*, or come into his conscious presence with *thanksgiving*? What human mind, that had but a single *spark* of humanity and benevolence lodged amidst its *darkness*, could rejoice?— Yet, O the power of sect and system to eclipse the glory of the gospel, blind the understanding, and banish all the best feelings of the heart, numbers *can* rejoice in a miserable religion, in a miserable party, and in a miserable ministry, that are continually holding up to their view, for their *delightful* contemplation, edification, and improvement, the woful and dismal picture of accountable creatures without liberty, doctrines without sense, mysteries without meaning, phrases without ideas, grace without morality, belief without good works, faith without reason, and a God without

without mercy !——Suppose an angel of God were dispatched from the mansions of the Blessed to inform a good Christian that *he* and his *family* were in the happy number of the few elect, that *his* and *their* particular salvation was secure, though great numbers of his relations and friends in the *village, town,* or *city* in which he lived, were eternally fated to be everlastingly miserable : favoured with this intelligence *could* he rejoice ? *Couldest* thou, O reader, in *such* circumstances, though honoured with *such* a message, rejoice ?——Impossible ! Humanity forbids it ! Thou *couldest* not rejoice in a Being who distributed his favours with so partial and envious an hand ; in a Being, whose *Justice* was *Cruelty*, and whose *Mercy* was *Weakness* ! A benevolent mind, though informed in *this* condescending manner, of its *own* and its *family's* future happiness, would drop a generous tear over the world, sacred to the wretched doom and
destiny

destiny of its miserable fellow-mortals—rendered *miserable*, not by their own *personal* faults and follies, but devoted and fated to this inevitable wretchedness by an eternal decree, which they can neither reverse or soften.

SECTION VII.

§ 7. BUT *Predestination* is not only a cheerless and uncomfortable doctrine, and tends to wrap the miserable mind, that is possessed with it, in gloom, melancholy, and despair, but it cuts at once all the sinews of *morality*, and renders practical holiness absurd and vain. The faithful remonstrances and painful compunctions of CONSCIENCE, that sacred principle, interwoven by the hand of our Maker into the very frame and texture of our moral constitution, which never fails to condemn vice as the sole disgrace and reproach of our nature, and the sole bane, ruin, and destruction of human happiness, inflicting such acute
anguish

anguish and wretchedness after the perpetration of a crime, and filling the mind of the sinner with *ominous* fears and *foreboding* terrors, are upon this scheme all fallacious. The *scriptural* exhortations, so earnestly and pathetically addressed to men to repent, to amend their lives, to obey the commands of God, and to work out their own salvation, are upon this hypothesis all preposterous and useless, since it is impossible for any man to alter his destiny, and dissolve the adamantine bonds of inexorable fate. *Reprobation* at once supercedes all moral goodness and obedience, and renders all the *satisfactions* of conscious virtue, and all the *dissatisfactions* of conscious wickedness, all the divine admonitions to an *holy* life, and all the divine dehortations from a *bad* life, false and delusory. If the Divine *prescience* and *omnipotence* hath absolutely predetermined the present moral or immoral state of all men, if the Reprobates cannot but
do

do evil, and the Elect cannot but do well, if God acts irresistibly on *one*, and the Devil on the *other*, then it is impossible, as one justly observes, for either one or the other to *help acting* as they do; or rather, to *help being acted upon* in the manner wherein they are. For if we speak properly, neither the one nor the other can be said to *act* at all. Can the stone be said to act, when it is thrown out of a sling? or a ball, when it is projected from a cannon? No more can a man be said to act, if he be only moved by a force he cannot resist. But if the case be thus, you leave no room either for reward or punishment. Shall the stone be rewarded for rising from the sling, or punished for falling down? Shall the cannon-ball be rewarded for flying toward the gun, or punished for receding from it? As incapable of either punishment or reward is the man, who is supposed to be impelled by a force he cannot resist. Justice can have no place

place in rewarding or punishing mere machines, driven to and fro by an external force. So that the supposition of God's ordaining from eternity whatsoever should be done to the end of the world, as well as that of God's acting irresistibly in the Elect, and Satan's acting irresistibly in the Reprobate, utterly overthrows the scripture doctrine of rewards and punishments, as well as of a judgment to come*. If the human mind be not free, if all its moral powers are fettered in the iron shackles of absolute Fate, and obey, not the spontaneous motions of the will, but the invincible impulse of dire necessity, if the future salvation and perdition of man is not the result of his own personal conduct, but he hath been elected to the *one*, and devoted to the *other*, before he had a being, farewell to all religion and morality, farewell to all ideas

* See doctrine of Predestination calmly considered by *John Wesley*, p. 31.

of the justice, rectitude, and goodness of the Deity; for this at once releases us from all obligations to an holy life, renders practical obedience and moral virtue a visionary phantom, an absurd chimera, and makes all the scriptural calls and invitations to repentance and holiness a solemn farce and mockery. For if there is an irrevocable decree *already* gone forth against us, which it is not in our power to reverse or mitigate, how inconsistent and useless are any endeavours we can employ, and how ridiculous and fruitless must be every thing we can do, to influence our final condition.

SECTION VIII.

§ 8. IF the doctrine of *Predestination* be true, the office of a *preacher* is absurd. Why do I and thousands, every sabbath, earnestly exhort our hearers to repentance and amendment of life, press upon Christian people, by every

every argument we can use, the indispensable necessity of practical holiness and vital experimental religion, and admonish them to exert their own endeavours, to fly from the wrath to come, and to insure their own salvation, if the everlasting condition of every one in our assemblies was unconditionally and absolutely predetermined from all eternity? If there be already a decree passed against *every* soul that hears us, a decree of election or reprobation, *our preaching is vain, your faith is also vain.* If the everlasting state of all souls is immutably pre-ordained and irreversibly fixed, religious parents and instructors, moralists and ministers, can do no good, neither save themselves, nor those that hear them : they might with as much propriety attempt to pluck the stars from their sphere, suspend a river in its course, or call up the shades of their departed ancestors.—I have

a curious † book published by one *Beverovicus*, a learned *Dutch* physician, containing a number of letters which he sent to several of the most eminent divines in *Holland* to have their opinion upon this question : Whether the period of every man's life was decreed, and the particular *time*, and particular *manner* of death was immutably predetermined in the Divine counsels ? He wanted to have full and entire satisfaction on this interesting subject, before he would attempt to exercise the *medical art*.—And this was very proper and commendable. For if the *exact duration* of every man's life is unalterably fixed, and he cannot lengthen and extend it a single *month*, a single *day*, or even a single *moment*, and if the precise *time* and *manner* of every person's departure from this world is absolutely pre-ordained, the profession of a *Phy-*

† The title is : *Job. Beverovicii Epistolica Quæstio de vitæ termino fatali an mobili cum doctorum responsis.* Dordrecht 1634.

sician is absurd, and all attention to the *preservation* of health, all the salutary herbs that propitious nature furnishes, and all the knowledge and skill of expelling diseases and averting death, that human genius and long experience can acquire, are useless and insignificant. — After the example of this worthy foreign *Physician*, let every person, who assumes the *ministerial* character, and undertakes the arduous province of reclaiming and saving souls, previously satisfy himself on what foundation the doctrine of unconditional election and absolute predestination rests, whether *reason* and *scripture* give their *united* sanction to such a tenet—if they do not, he may be useful, and his office is a most important, glorious, and honourable function—but if ALL men are either *fated* to be *happy*, or *fated* to be *miserable*, it is impossible he should do any good, all his services must be totally lost upon the world.

SECTION IX.

§ 9. IF the doctrine of *Predestination* be true, what use and necessity is there for a day of *judgment* and final retribution? If men were *judged* before they were born, any *future* judgment is absurd. All the divine assurances that there comes a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, fall to the ground. For if the final doom and destiny of *every* soul is fixed, absolutely and inevitably fixed, before it hath a being, then the present life is not a state of trial and probation, not a state of discipline and education for heaven; and all the virtuous dispositions we can cultivate and acquire, and all the preparation we *ourselves* can make for death and judgment, are inane and frivolous. What occasion for a *judgment* day, if the sentence hath *already* been pronounced? What occasion for all mankind to be summoned before the tribunal

bunal of Christ, much less, what occasion is there for them to give an account of the *deeds done in the body*, if their final state is to be determined, and was eternally determined by an arbitrary, irrevocable destiny?—This tremendous and most awful truth of a future general judgment, when all the human race will be congregated in one vast assembly, and all rational and moral agents, who have existed from the beginning to the end of time, be judged according to their *works*, according to what they have done in *this* world, whether it be good or evil, and in consequence, solely, of their personal *conduct* in this state of trial, everlasting happiness or misery assigned to them—this one grand and solemn TRUTH disperses into, empty air the vain phantom of fatalism, causes to vanish all the darkness and horrors of *Predestination* : and the divine assurance of the glorious future morning of the RESURRECTION, when every

one of us will be judged according to the respective nature of his *actions*, dissipates, eternally dissipates all this dismal systematic gloom, and forces it to retreat with precipitation and infinite disgrace to its *original* native abodes—*Erebus* and *Rome*, *Hell* and the *Vatican*.

SECTION X.

§ 10. GOD is the Almighty Sovereign, Proprietor, and Disposer of all things. He is the supreme Lord, Ruler, and Governor of universal nature, and dispenseth his blessings as seemeth best to his infinite understanding. In his character irresistible power, unerring wisdom, impartial justice, and perfect rectitude, are united with infinite goodness and boundless benevolence. As the Creator and Lord of the universe he hath communicated external and moral advantages to nations, communities, and individuals, very variously. We
see

see *one* vast extent of country swarming with millions of his rational creatures, all immersed in the profoundest ignorance and heathenism, paying their adorations to imaginary deities, maintaining the most absurd and fabulous tenets concerning a Providence and a future state, and to the last degree rude and uncivilized, illiterate and barbarous—And yet *these* are the children of the *same common* PARENT as we *Christians* are. *Another* country we behold, whose numberless inhabitants are blessed with a Divine Revelation, who enjoy, through the distinguished goodness of the supreme Disposer, the exalted, invaluable, and envied advantages of *civil* and *religious* liberty; arts and sciences, literature and erudition flourishing among them, happy in all the accommodations and elegancies of life, the whole region fair and blooming as the garden of God, and the whole collective community happy in the enjoyment of true religion, happy in the fruition of

tran-

tranquillity and plenty, happy in the possession of every *public, social, and domestic* blessing. This *distinction* is solely of Divine appointment. That *one* immense body of rational creatures should be happy in religious light and liberty, *another* vast and populous country drag the fetters of arbitrary power, lawless tyranny, and religious slavery, is the Deity's all-wise destination, and is to be regarded as the execution of his original plan and scheme in the moral government and administration of *this* world. The *plan* of the Divine government is a most magnificent and extensive scheme; he hath arranged the order of his various *successive* dispensations to his creatures in a regular and beautiful series, hath pre-ordained in what *nation*, in what *situation*, every individual of his rational creatures should be born, having fore-appointed the times of every one's appearance in the world, and prescribed the bounds of his habitation. His wisdom

hath

hath appointed in what *class* and *order* of society every one should be fixed, what particular *advantages* every one should enjoy for the improvement of his mind, the acquisition of knowledge, and the *present* and *future* fruition of happiness. That *one* man should possess by *birth* and *situation*, *privileges* that are denied to *another*—that one should be born of *opulent*, another of *indigent* parents—that *different* minds should be endowed with *different* degrees of *genius*, *penetration*, and *sagacity*—that *one* man should inherit from nature a *robust* and *vigorous* constitution, *another* should go mourning through life's vain pilgrimage in sickness and weakness and natural debility—that *one* rational agent fills an *illustrious* and *dignified*, *another* an *obscure* and *sordid*, station—and all the various *forms*, *features*, and *complexions* which diversify the human species—all these are the arbitrary destination of *the Lord of Life*, who gives
existence

existence in what *manner*, in what *age*, in what *nation*, under what *form* of government, under what *circumstances* he pleaseth, and which, upon the *whole*, appear fittest and best to his infinite and all-comprehensive mind. —But let it be remembered that these are only TEMPORAL advantages or disadvantages, that they relate merely to the *present* secular state and disposition of things; but that the great God hath made our FUTURE happiness dependent on *ourselves*, hath set *life* and *death* before us, and freely left us to our choice, hath laid before us *certain* terms and conditions, our compliance or non-compliance with which is to decide our *future* condition, and hath totally suspended our *final* happiness or misery on the *deeds* we do in *this* body. That variety of religious and moral advantages, which God hath imparted to various *nations* and communities, and those *respective* privileges and opportunities for the culture
and

and improvement of the mind in knowledge and virtue, which the Creator hath *differently* dispersed, may affect the *degree*, but can have no influence on the *nature* of mens final recompences—the virtuous *Christian* enjoying, by his religion, the best advantages for attaining the *highest* degrees of future happiness, the virtuous *Heathen*, by the *comparative* disadvantages of his situation, not being expected to attain such *distinguisht* holiness, and, consequently, not such *distinguisht* and *exalted* happiness as the *Christian*. The *country*, *family*, and *station* of every being is God's appointment, his *conduct* in that station is his *own* appointment, and his happiness or misery in a future state is to flow from his own *improvement* or *misimprovement* of the *advantages* that God afforded him, be they *greater* or *smaller*. The *circumstances*, in which we are ushered into being, are God's designation, the *use* or *abuse* of *them* is entirely chargeable
on

on *ourselves*, is our own personal *act* and *deed*, by which alone our *future* condition is to be regulated and determined.

SECTION XI.

§ 11. THE source, from which this horrible doctrine of *personal Election* and *Predestination* was originally derived, was undoubtedly the misinterpretation and misunderstanding of St. *Paul's* Epistles, and was at first owing to a precipitate and forced construction of several passages in which these terms occur. Thanks be to God for universal toleration, for freedom in enquiry, and liberty in religion! The darkness that once shrouded Christianity hath, in these last ages of knowledge and enquiry, been greatly dispelled, and those many passages of scripture, which once appeared so dark and inexplicable, and were universally thought to contain such a dread-

a dreadful and shocking doctrine as *unconditional reprobation* and other horrid tenets, which, if true, would everlastingly eclipse the goodness of God, and will for ever reflect dishonour on the humanity and benevolence of those who *first* vended and fixed them, and *now* vend and fix them, on the scriptures, are clearly and satisfactorily explained by learned and ingenious men to the *honour* of God, of *truth*, and of Divine *inspiration*. That *election*, which so *often* occurs in St. Paul's writings, does not relate to *individuals*, but *nations*—does not respect, was never designed to respect, *particular* men, but large *bodies* and *communities* of men, *collectively* considered. Carefully read St. Paul's Epistles to the *Romans* and *Galatians*, and you will clearly perceive, that the *election* he speaks of, is not an election to *future* happiness, but solely to *gospel advantages* and *blessings* in *this* world. The *Jewish* nation, on account
of

of the illustrious piety of their ancestors, were favoured with *distinguished* privileges. They were *separated* from the corrupt mass of heathenism and idolatry to be the people of God, and to be happy in superior light and superior advantages. Hence the whole nation of *Israel*, including good and bad, are denominated the *elect* and *chosen* of God. Hence such appellations and titles as the following : *The children or sons of God : the holy people : a chosen seed : the elect : the called : a peculiar people : the Lord's inheritance.* This *chosen* people, for their obstinate disobedience and disbelief of the gospel, were *rejected* of God—upon their rejection the Almighty *elected* the *Gentiles*—the whole body of Christians among the Heathens now became the *elect*, were a *chosen generation*, a *purchased possession*, a *royal priesthood*, a *peculiar people*. So that the *election* and *reprobation* of which St. Paul treats, relateth to *Jews* and *Gentiles* considered

sidered as *nations*, not as *individuals*, The whole system of *Christians*, collectively considered, good and bad, were the *chosen and elect* of God, as by his grace and mercy, through Jesus Christ, they were called out of heathenish darkness into his marvellous light, and were favoured with the privileges and blessings of the gospel. So that, as Dr. TAYLOR in his *Key to the Romans* very justly observes, there is a *first and final* election—the one respecting the *present*, the other a *future* state—the *first* we entirely owe to the grace and benignity of God in favouring us with *evangelical* advantages, the *other* is dependent on *ourselves*—we must owe it to our own *personal* conduct—for we *ourselves* make *this* calling and election sure, and by *our own* virtuous diligence work out this our final salvation.—Moreover, the *election*, of which the scripture speaks, when it uses this term concerning *individuals*, refers not to happiness

in a *future* state, but only to particular *stations* and *offices* in the *present* life, which God of his infinite wisdom hath seen fit to assign to *particular* men. For example, CYRUS was *elected* to rebuild the temple. JUDAS was one of the *elect*. Have not I *chosen* you *twelve*? When the Son of Man cometh, you shall sit on *twelve* thrones. He was chosen to the honours and dignity of an Apostle *equally* with the rest—and, no doubt, was a good man, and had a good heart when our Lord chose him to be one of his companions and friends. But it does not follow, because a man is *once* virtuous and good, that he will *ever* continue so *. ST. PAUL also was a *chosen*

* So judged that excellent and amiable philosopher XENOPHON. Ἰσως οὖν εἰποῖεν ἐν πολλοῖς τῶν φασησάντων φιλοσοφεῖν. &c. &c. Perhaps many who profess to philosophize may assert, that a *good* man can never become *wicked*, or a *sober* man *intemperate*, or a person ever forget

chosen vessel—but in what respect?—Was it that from all eternity he was unconditionally elected to eternal life?—The scripture informs us what this election was—namely, to preach the gospel among the *Gentiles*. His designation to this office was his *election*—

forget any science he hath once learned. My sentiments of these things are very different. For as I see that those, who use not *bodily* exercise, render themselves incapable of performing the functions of the *body*; so I perceive that those, who do not cultivate the faculties of the *mind*, incur a total inability for performing the offices of the *mind*: for they bring upon themselves a moral impossibility of doing what they ought to do, and of refraining from what they ought to refrain. *He concludes with this just reflection.* *Ἦναι οὐκ ἀνδραγαθῶν. κ. λ.* Why should it not therefore be admitted as very possible, That he who once was *sober* should afterwards prove *intemperate*; and he who once could do virtuous actions should afterwards totally incapacitate himself for the performance of them? *Xenophon. Memorab. p. 20, 21, 22. Edit. Oxon. 1741.*

But for the faithful or unfaithful discharge of this arduous office he himself was accountable—this was his own *personal* act—and it was this alone that was to *influence* his *final* condition ! A dispensation hath been committed to me, and woe is me if I preach not the gospel. All the *whole body* of Christians are called in scripture the *elect* of God, yet who can suppose that not one *single individual* of the *whole Christian name* in all the *Roman empire* would miss of salvation ? St. *Paul*, as above-mentioned, was a *chosen vessel*, yet he assures us he might have reprobated himself; and by neglecting his duty have rendered himself *disapproved* and *rejected* of God. “ I would observe,” says my late worthy and learned friend Dr. *Benson*, “ that there is one “ single text, *viz.* 1 *Cor.* ix. 27. which, if “ rightly translated, would give the *English* “ reader a just notion of the scriptural doctrine of election and reprobation, and clearly “ show

“ show him, that *particular* persons are not,
 “ in holy writ, represented as elected, abso-
 “ lutely and unconditionally, to everlasting
 “ life ; or predestinated, absolutely and un-
 “ conditionally, to everlasting damnation ; but
 “ that *all* Christians in *general* are elected to
 “ enjoy the Christian privileges here upon
 “ earth, which if they abuse, those very *elect*
 “ persons will become *reprobates*. The words
 “ of that text are the words of St. *Paul* con-
 “ cerning *himself*, who declared, I keep under
 “ my body, and bring it into subjection ; lest
 “ by any means, when I have preached the
 “ gospel to others, I myself *should become*
 “ *reprobate*—*αυτος αδοκιμος γενωμαι*. Now St.
 “ *Paul* was certainly a *chosen* vessel, an *elect*
 “ person, if ever there was one. And yet he
 “ declares, it was possible that he himself,
 “ though an *elect* person, might become a
 “ *reprobate*. Nay, if he had *not* kept under
 “ his body, and brought his senses, passions,

" and appetites in subjection to his conscience,
 " he *had actually* become a *reprobate*, though
 " he had been so long an *elect* person, a
 " Christian, and an Apostle, and though he
 " had preached to others, and been the means
 " of the salvation of multitudes *."

SECTION XII.

§ 12. To the preceding treatise I thought
 it would not be improper to annex the senti-
 ments of the following eminent Divines, as
 the reader will pay a greater deference to the
 learning and judgment of these celebrated and
 illustrious critics and scholars, than to any
 thing I could advance on the subject.

GROTIUS: De prædestinatione illâ, de quâ
 multa in scholis dicuntur, nullus hîc [in epis-
 tolâ ad Romanos] sermo, neque vero ad rem.

* See Dr. Benson's *Traacts*, p. 150, 151. 3d Edit.

id pertinebat. *Grotius in Præf. Epist. ad Rom. p. 672. Edit. Lond. 1679.* See also his Comment. on *Matth. xxiv. 22.* and *1 Pet. i. 1.*

LIMBORCH : Doctrina de absolutâ prædestinatione apta est in iis, qui se electos credunt, producere securitatem carnalem ; in aliis vero, qui se reproborum numero contineri credunt, desperationem : quæ duo omnis religionis pestes sunt—Omnem pietatis sectandæ et impietatis fugiendæ curam extinguit : quia curam illam reddit inutilem—Doctrinâ de absolutâ reprobatione gloriæ Dei est adversa, utpote pugnans cum variis ipsius attributis, nimirum, sanctitate, justitiâ, sinceritate, sapientiâ, amore seu *φιλανθρωπία*—*Limborch. Theol. Christ. p. 305, 306. 321. Edit. Hag. Com. 1736.*

LOCKE : That he here [9th of the *Romans*] speaks of men *nationally*, and not *personally*, in reference to their eternal state, is evident

not only from the beginning of this chapter, where he shews his concern for the *nation* of the *Jews* being cast off from being God's people; and the instances he brings of *Isaac*, of *Jacob* and *Esau*, and of *Pharao*; but it appears also very clearly in the verses immediately following, where by the *vessels of wrath fitted for destruction*, he manifestly means the *nation* of the *Jews*, who were now grown ripe, and fit for the destruction he was bringing upon them. *Locke on Romans, ch. ix. ver. 20. in the notes.*

TILLOTSON: False and mistaken principles in religion; as this for one: that God does not sincerely desire the salvation of men, but hath from all eternity effectually barred the greatest part of mankind from all possibility of attaining that happiness which he offers to them; and every one hath cause to fear that he may be in the number. This were a melancholy consideration indeed, if it were

were true ; but there is no ground, either from reason or scripture, to entertain any such thought of God. Our destruction is of ourselves ; and no man shall be ruined by any decree of God, who does not ruin himself by his own fault. *Tillotson's Sermons, vol. 1. p. 231. 12^{mo}.* Men cannot easily have a blacker thought of God, than to imagine that he hath, from all eternity, carried on a secret design to circumvent the greatest part of men into a plot against heaven, that by this unworthy practice he may raise a revenue of glory to his justice. There is no generous and good man but would spit in that man's face that should charge him with such a design ; and if they who are but very drops of goodness in comparison of God, the infinite ocean of goodness, would take it for such a reproach, shall we attribute that to the best Being in the world, which we would detest and abominate in ourselves ? *Vol. 8. p. 97. 12^{mo}.* God is infinitely

infinitely better than the best of men ; and yet none can possibly think that man a good man, who should absolutely resolve to disinherit and destroy his children, without the foresight and consideration of any fault to be committed by them. We may talk of the goodness of God, but it is not an easy matter to devise to say any thing worse than this of the devil. *Vol. 8. p. 226. 12^{mo}. See also, p. 10.*

WHITBY : To say God seriously invites, exhorts, and requires all men to work out their salvation, and yet by his decree of Reprobation hath rendered that event to the most of them impossible ; that he requires all men to repent, that they may not perish, and yet by his decree or secret will hath rendered that event to most of them to whom he speaketh in his word impossible, is to make the gospel of Christ a mockery. *Whitby on the Five Points, p. 76.* The election mentioned in
the

the holy scriptures is not that of *particular* persons, but only of *churches* and *nations*, p. 36. The very learned and candid Dr. *Jortin* gives this just character of the excellent treatise here quoted. “*Whitby* published “some tracts on election, reprobation, and “original sin, and in these treatises he confuted CALVINISM even to a demonstration.” *Dr. Jortin’s Six Dissertations*, p. 113.

DR. CLARKE : Some have from these passages attempted to deduce the doctrine of absolute Predestination ; that because the decrees and purposes of God are unchangeable, therefore mens salvation or condemnation does not at all depend on any works in their own power. And indeed were there any such decree, it could not be denied but it would be unchangeable ; and consequently that all religion were vain. But the *truth* is, that the scripture mentions no *such* decree at all ; and therefore men need not be concerned about

about the unchangeableness of that which has no being. *Dr. Clarke's Sermons, vol. 1. p. 93, 94, 12^{mo}.* And from hence by the way it is evident demonstrably, that there *is* not, there *cannot be* any such thing as *absolute* and *unconditionate Reprobation*. For this being a matter wholly contradictory to all our notions of goodness, &c. *Ibid. p. 299.* The 9th chapter of the Epistle to the *Romans*, which has sometimes perplexed the minds of well-meaning persons, was by all Christians in the first ages without difficulty, and is *now* again by all rational men, who attend to the scope of the Apostle's argument, more than to the schemes of mens own inventing, clearly understood to be written, not concerning God's choosing some *particular persons*, and rejecting *others* from eternal salvation, but concerning his rejecting the *nation* of the *Jews*, and receiving in the *Gentiles* to be partakers of the *benefits of the gospel* : and the

the *elect* there spoken of are the *whole Christian* church, whereof *all* nevertheless do not attain unto salvation ; and the *reprobate* there mentioned are the *whole nation* of the unbelieving *Jews*, whereof *all* nevertheless were not finally cast off : and when God's fore-determination of *particular persons* is spoken of, it is not a fore-appointment to *eternal* happiness or misery, but always to some *temporal* office or advantage only: Vol. 10. p. 216. 12^{mo}.

GROVE : And as this notion of divine *love* is unworthy of God, so it is big with terror and affrightment to the creature, unless a man hath the good luck to be of a temper to believe every thing, *with reason or without it*, that he is willing to believe. For say that this *love* proceeds by a *decimation*, taking *one* out of *ten*, there will then be *nine* to *one* against *every single* person, that he is *not* of the happy number. Nor, to speak truth, can I perceive any great ground of rejoicing that
 2 the

the *favourites* themselves have, provided they use their reason, or have any spark of generosity in them; for when they think of the principle on which they imagine the Deity to act, in selecting them from the common mass of mankind, and using so much severity towards others, how can they have any dependence on the favour of such a Being? He that hath no other reason for all that he does but mere will and pleasure, may alter his will without reason. What is there more dishonourable to God in deceiving his creatures with fair promises, which he never intends to fulfill, than in putting them under an inevitable necessity of being for ever miserable? This being supposed no disparagement to the Deity, is there any thing else that can be so? Could a person who aimed to conform all his own actions to reason, and esteemed it the greatest glory of a Being to do good to all according to his ability, have much satisfaction in the
friendship

friendship of a prince, who, while he caressed a few of his subjects, had formed a design of ruining *all* the rest, and making them feel the weight of his power, for no other reason, but that it so pleased him? To those whom such a prince should call near him, and load with honours, one might apply the words of the *Roman Satyrift*.

*In quorum facie miserae magnæque sedebat
Pallor amicitia.*—— JUV. SAT. 4.

*Grove's wisdom the first spring of action
in the Deity. Vol. 4. p. 101, 102.*

Shall we represent Almighty God as making a *feast* with the same insidious design as men have sometimes done it, only that they might *massacre* the guests; thereby *adding* the most detestable *treachery* to the most horrid *cruelty*?
Grove's works, vol. 6. p. 390.

DR. TAYLOR : I make no doubt but the doctrine of *Original Sin*, whereby we are supposed to be necessarily corrupt and wicked ; and the doctrine of *irresistible Grace*, whereby we are supposed to be necessarily made holy ; the doctrine of particular absolute *Election* and *Reprobation* : I make doubt, I say, but these doctrines are *Manichæism* christianized. And it is such doctrines as *these*, that have misrepresented the *Christian* religion, harassed the *Christian* world endlessly ; by blinding and confounding mens understandings, and imbittering their spirits ; and have been the occasion of calling in the help of a false kind of learning, *Logic*, *Metaphysics*, *School-Divinity*, in order to give a colour of reason to the grossest absurdities, and to enable *Divines* to make a plausible shew of supporting and defending palpable contradictions. *Dr. Taylor's Key to the Romans*, p. 102, 103. *Notes.* 2d Edit.

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DR. JORTIN : In *England*, at the time of the synod of *Dort*, we also were much divided in our opinions concerning the controverted articles ; but our Divines having taken the liberty to think and judge for themselves, and the civil government not interposing, it hath come to pass that, from *that* time to *this*, almost all persons here of any note for learning and abilities have bid adieu to *Calvinism*, have sided with the *Remonstrants*, and have left the *Fatalists* to follow their own opinions, and to rejoice (since they can rejoice) in a religious system, consisting of human creatures without liberty, doctrines without sense, faith without reason, and a God without mercy. *Dr. Jortin's Six Dissertations*, p. 111.

SECTION XIII.

§ 13. The voice of *reason*, therefore, the language of divine *revelation*, and the united

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testimony

testimony of the *greatest* and *best* of men, harmoniously conspire to assure us, that HEAVEN IS OPEN TO ALL MEN, and none is excluded from everlasting happiness but he who wilfully excludes himself. The blessed God predestinates no one to misery; it is man that predestinates and reprobates himself, when he deliberately chooses a sinful life, and is determined not to be virtuous, chaste, sober, temperate, and religious. Holiness of heart and life, Reader, holiness of heart and life, is the only final election. Holiness is every thing with God. Nothing but the want of this disqualifies for heaven. The pure in heart shall see God, the impure and self-polluted shall be eternally banished his presence and kingdom. No heaven without personal holiness: no final happiness without holy dispositions and moral qualifications previously acquired for the fruition of it. Our Creator hath endowed us with freedom of will and liberty

liberty of action. He hath set *virtue* and *vice*, *life* and *death*, before us, and left us to the use or abuse of our free agency, left us to choose the *one* or the *other*. We may embrace *virtue*, we may prefer *vice*. We may possess purity of heart and sanctity of manners; we may corrupt our minds, and plunge ourselves in guilt and wretchedness. God hath given us *reason* to be our amiable directress, and *revelation* to be our heavenly guide; but hath put no coercive restraints upon our wills and actions; hath left us to *improve* reason, or *obscure* it; to *adorn* the gospel, or *disgrace* it; to obey the friendly dictates of conscience, or stifle and silence its remonstrances; to maintain the native dignity of our rational and moral nature, or dethrone and sink it below the brutes; and to render ourselves either the virtuous heirs of immortality, or the deserved objects of everlasting destruction. The *power* to *do* or to *forbear*

actions, is what properly denominates and constitutes us *virtuous* or *vicious*. The *power to perform* or *decline* acting, is rather an absolute FACT than an abstruse ideal point of metaphysical speculation. All future *rewards* and *punishments* are founded on man's *accountableness*, on his moral liberty freely to choose *virtue* or *vice*. *Be not deceived : God is not mocked : whatsoever a man sows, that shall he reap.* Where is the necessity, rectitude, and wisdom in appointing a DAY OF JUDGMENT and final recompences according to the respective nature of mens actions and *different* characters, if man is a torpid inactive machine, that only obeys the laws and impulse of dire necessity, hath no volition, spontaneity, and power he can call his own, hath been arbitrarily elected to happiness, or unconditionally predestinated to misery from all eternity, and hath all his mental and moral powers shackled in the adamantine fetters of a rigid and inflexible

flexible fatality ? Where is the *honour*, the *congruity* of rewarding *necessary* virtue, which the *elect* could not but perform, and of punishing necessary wickedness, which the *reprobated* were irresistibly compelled to commit, and which no power and endeavours they could exert could possibly prevent ? How inconsistent is this with the pathetic exhortations of scripture, solemnly and importunately addressed to men, to fly from the wrath to come, to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, to regard the things that belong to their everlasting peace before they are, through their own inconsideration, for ever hid from their eyes, to give all diligence to make their calling and election sure ? He sent to call them, but they would not come. I have called, but you have refused. God speaketh once, nay twice, but man regardeth it not. You do always resist the Holy Spirit. You put it from you, and judge yourselves
unworthy

unworthy of eternal life. See that you refuse not him that speaketh. While it is called to day harden not your heart. Have I any pleasure at all, that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God; and not that he should return from his ways and live? Cast away from you all your transgressions whereby you have transgressed—for why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord: wherefore turn yourselves and live ye. As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel? How tender and moving the complaint which the compassionate Redeemer, bathed in a flood of tears, uttered over an abandoned and incorrigible people, whose wickedness had defeated all his attempts to reclaim and save them! O Jerusalem! Jerusalem!

salem ! how often would I have gathered thy
 children, as a hen gathereth her chickens
 under her wings, but you would not ! O that
 thou hadst known the things that belong to
 thy peace ! Besides, how often is it said, that
 Christ died for ALL : that he is the propitia-
 tion for the sins of the WHOLE world : that
 he died for ALL, that men should not hence-
 forth live unto themselves : Wilt thou by thy
 meat *destroy* thy brother for *whom* Christ died
 —These texts, and a thousand other passages
 in the sacred scripture, represent the Deity in
 the most engaging light, as infinitely desirous
 of our final HAPPINESS, but willing we
 should obtain it in a way consistent with that
 freedom of will and liberty of action with
 which he hath endowed us. The most cogent
 arguments he hath addressed to us, and left
 us to the direction of our understandings,
 and the guidance of our wills, whether we
 will suffer these affecting and powerful con-
 siderations

siderations to *influence* us or *not*. He hath done every thing that infinite wisdom, equity, and goodness could do, both in the *constitution* of the human mind, and in the *system* of divine revelation, to engage us to be *wise*, *virtuous*, and *happy*. If we wilfully misimprove all these advantages, reject these equitable terms and conditions on which God hath suspended our felicity, and wantonly repulse and totally disregard all these pathetic persuasions, salutary admonitions, and importunate arguments and motives, that only have our best *interests* for their *object*—God is clear, the guilt and blame is ours, our condemnation is just, the result of our own wilful folly and inconsideration, sufficient *warning* was given us by *conscience*, by *reason*, by *parents*, by *ministers*, by *good books*, by the *word of God*; we are *solely* accessory to our own ruin, we bring it upon our self-devoted souls, we shall have no apology in the great
3
day

day to offer for our conduct, it will be impossible to excuse and palliate it, *our mouth will be stopped* before the tribunal, we shall not be able to tell our Judge that his *decrees* were *against* us, and that we could *not* repent and reform, and render ourselves virtuous and holy. There will not a word be said in that awful solemnity about *divine* decrees, or about *human* opinions; the grand, the sole enquiry will be concerning the *deeds* done in the *body*, *how* we have acted in this state of trial and education, what *good* we have done, how we have *behaved* in those stations and relations that infinite Wisdom assigned us. Reader, revolve this seriously. It is the most important doctrine in the whole circle of all divine and human truths. Thine ALL is dependent on the practical regard thou payest to it. Think what ETERNITY is, and what *course* of life will infallibly *secure* thee all its substantial, inconceivable, never-ending blessedness

sollicit ! O remember ! and suffer the remembrance to seal an indelible impression upon thine heart, that thou must very shortly appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, not to hear whether the decrees of God from all eternity were in thy *favour or disfavour*, not to be informed, by an inspection of the records of heaven, whether *thy name* is *fortuitously* among the number of the *elect* or the *reprobate*, but to receive the *things* thou hast done in the *body*, according to the *nature* of what thou hast done, whether it hath been *good*, or whether it hath been *bad*.

18 NO 67

F I N I S

BOOKS published by EDWARD HARWOOD,
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